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The impact of religion on political decision-making in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Debating Judaism and Zionism

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Resumo

Persiste até aos nossos dias uma grande confusão relativamente ao significado dos termos judaísmo e sionismo, tanto dentro como fora do Israel. A opinião popular que os termos são sinónimos implica a suposição falsa que antisionismo é igual a antissemitismo, o que permite ao regime de direita de Israel fazer uso desta falácia com o fim de justificar a colonização contínua da Palestina. Com base no trabalho dos chamados Novos Historiadores de Israel, esta dissertação de mestrado visa desconstruir o pensamento convencional a respeito dos termos judaísmo e sionismo, analisando a natureza dos principais fluxos ideológicos e suas interconexões complexas antes e depois de 1948. Os focos de análise são o judaísmo ortodoxo, sionismo religioso, messianismo judaico radical, fundamentalismo judaico, a mudança ideológica do sionismo tradicional e, por último, mas não menos importante, o impacto do sionismo cristão nos Estados Unidos.

Palavras-chave: judaísmo, sionismo, sionismo religioso, conflito israelo-palestiniano

Abstract

Until the present day, wide-spread confusion regarding the meaning of the terms Judaism and Zionism persists both inside and outside Israel. As the popular opinion that the terms are synonyms implies the false assumption that anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism, the Israeli right-wing regime uses this dangerous shortcut in order to justify its ongoing colonization of Palestine. Based on the work of Israel's New Historians, this master thesis aims at deconstructing the mainstream mindset concerning Judaism and Zionism by analysing the nature of the principal ideological streams and their complex interconnections before and after 1948; focussing on orthodox Judaism, religious Zionism, Jewish radical messianism, Jewish fundamentalism, the ideological change of traditional Zionism and, last but not least, the role of Christian Zionism in the United States.

Keywords: Judaism, Zionism, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, religious Zionism

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1 Introduction – the interplay between Judaism and Zionism

1.1 Major research question

The fact that Israel never envisaged the construction of an *Israeli* national identity that would naturally integrate non-Jewish citizens, but a *Jewish* privileged national identity reserved for Jews by the implementation of a 'Jewish ideology' demonstrates the power of Zionist politics until today. The result is a widely spread popular confusion about the meaning of both Zionism and Judaism. Until today, the opinion that the terms are synonyms persists. This, in turn, implies the consequence and widely spread assumption that anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism, which easily silences any critic of Israeli politics.

I confess my own prejudice. I grew up in a highly uncritical pro-Israel environment in Germany. Having internalised a clear picture of the 'Holy Land' being the only democracy in the Middle East surrounded by Muslim terrorist neighbours, I also equated anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. Any kind of Israeli political decision was easily justified with the need for Israeli defence. I have started to question this view when I met a young Palestinian student who explained me the Palestinian narrative of Israel's history.

The resulting concrete political consequences of this public confusion about the meaning of Zionism and Judaism constitute a major obstacle for the revitalisation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace-process. Against this background, it becomes an imperative to clarify their meaning and analyse possible relations between diverse forms of modern Zionism and Judaism, leading to the question: in how far are different forms of Judaism and Zionism interrelated? The importance of the analysis of this major research question does not only lie in the prevention of both political and moral consequences for the State of Israel and world Jewry, but also for an adequate dealing with Israel and Palestine for scholars.

1.2 Problems related to the study of the topic

The interplay between Zionism and Judaism is a complex field of study which holds many challenges. The first obstacle concerns the definition of both terms because they are no static concepts and submitted to change. As there is a wide range of different forms of Zionism and Judaism and many related subtopics, such as Jewish history and Jewish identity, the study of the complexity of these phenomena often adds to the already existing confusion.

With regard to Judaism, important fields of research include several approaches such as cultural, political, historical perspectives; religious concepts; territorial concepts and borderlands such as anti-Semitism. Given the fact that Judaism comprises all these diverse components and cultures, it is impossible to address all subtopics related to Judaism in this thesis. Thus, the most important tendencies that are the most relevant for the analysis will be presented. The second problem lies in the study of the origins of Judaism and Jewry because of the immense temporal distance to the ancient Hebrew people. Until today, archaeologists, historians and social scientists debate over the nature of ancient Israel and any type of discovery easily fuels the political conflict. The third problem is the subjective character of motives when studying Zionism and Judaism, as their interplay is directly connected to the complex Israeli-Palestinian conflict and often to personal religious and political attitudes. Studies must lie on the ground of credible observations and research. Yet, as Ilan Pappé puts it, "the subjectivity and relativity of any representation do not invalidate moral and ethical discussion about the representation" (2016: 3). It is in this sense that the present thesis wants to contribute to achieving a more fruitful debate regarding the interplay between Judaism and Zionism.

1.3 Methodology

Given the complexity of the topic, I have chosen to take a qualitative and interpretive approach based on the critical evaluation of existing literature. In contrast to the difficulties within the study of Judaism, a more objective approach to the nature of modern Zionism could be reached more easily, as the temporal distance to its roots is, compared to Judaism, manageable.

The following qualitative analysis largely focusses on the body of research of Israel's so-called New Historians. The most influencing and prominent New Historians include Benny Morris (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), who coined the term in 1988, Avi Shlaim of Oxford University and Ilan Pappé of Haifa University. Israel adopted the thirty-year rule model of Britain as the basis for reviewing and declassifying official state documents. This liberal archive law (1955) allowed the access to primary source material from the Foreign Office, the Prime Minister's Office, the Defence Ministry and documents of the Israeli Defence Forces Archives (IDF) in the early 1980s; thirty years after the establishment of Israel in 1948 (The Office of the Historian, s.a.). The waste archives of the latter revealed in particular the history of early Israeli statehood. Since the releasing of these documents, the New Historians have challenged the persisting official Zionist narrative of the history of Israel and marked a turning point in the

study of Israeli history, as they criticized the actions of Zionists during the first Arab-Israeli war and challenged 'the founding myths of Israel'[1]. By combining their conclusions with those of historians evaluating British and American archive material, it became possible to challenge the most persisting myths about the early days of Israeli history: for long, the Israeli-Arab War of 1948 was perceived as synonym for Israel's 'War of Independence'. By presenting the Palestinian side of the coin, the *Nakba* (Arabic: "disaster", "catastrophe"), which means for the Palestinian people the loss of their homeland, a completely new perception originating from inside Israel confronted this mainstream narrative. When referring to the meaning and nature of Judaism today, my source material comes from scholarly books, publications of Jewish religious leaders and scientific articles, of which a large part is released by the Journal of Palestine Studies.

1.4 Thesis overview and hypothesis

After the introduction, the second chapter will outline key thoughts on the role of religion and nationalism in contemporary conflicts in general, before presenting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the two different existing approaches to it - the religious and the political approach. I argue that both views should not be regarded completely separately from each other: as religion holds a deep notion of power over people, religion's influence on politics should be part of the scientific conflict analysis in conflict contexts, in particular in the case of Israel and Palestine. When analysing the interplay between Judaism and Zionism, I refer to Zionism as settler colonialism. The introduction to the settler colonialist nature of Zionism as well as the introduction to religion's influence on politics in general conclude the second chapter of the thesis. The third chapter will present the meaning of Judaism and Zionism prior and after the establishment of Israel in 1948, which is the fundamental basis for the ensuing analysis. The analysis itself will refer to the Jewish religious attitudes on the conflict today and present the links between different forms of Judaism and Zionism. In this context, Christian Zionism, Neozionism and Jewish fundamentalism are key phenomena for understanding the use of Judaism by Zionism for legitimating political purposes, namely violent and illegal settlement policies in Palestinian territory. Lastly, before concluding the analysis, I will outline the phenomenon of the 'Judaization' of the conflict and its problematic consequences, which, in view of current political events such as US President Donald Trump's Jerusalem policies, becomes an increasingly important topic.

[1] See for example: Pappé, Ilan (2007): The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.

Given the fact that the status of Jerusalem is one of the most central issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in the beginning of December 2017 is highly controversial. This provocative decision culminated in the opening of the US. Embassy in Jerusalem on the 14th May 2018, coinciding with Israel's 70th 'Independence Day', one day before the annually commemorated Nakba Day.

2 Preliminary considerations

2.1 The role of religion and nationalism in contemporary conflicts

Both nationalism and religion are what people make of them. More precisely, the notion of both terms is mainly built on a specific European-Christian history and has since then often been treated like a universal approach. Given the fact that the meanings of nationalism and religion can comprise whole multidimensional worlds, there is a lack of common agreement concerning their definitions which leads to antithetical claims about their relation. In addition to this, the interplay between religion and nationalism is a relatively new field of study. For long, the two terms have been strictly separated from each other, as a result of the long-dominating assumption that nationalism equals modernity and modernity equals secularization[2].

However, secularization theory has been largely replaced by 'the desecularization of the world' (Berger 1999; Scott 2005) and it seems like if the pendulum swung from one extreme view into the other. For long, the role of religion tended to be neglected or even ignored in publications of conflict and peace studies and in international relations in general. Yet, from the 1990s on, literature addressing the relationship between religion and conflicts started to emerge with several viewpoints. In this context, Samuel Huntington's hypothesis of the 'clash of civilizations' (1993) is regarded as central to the whole debate. The American scientist argued that people's cultural and religious identities will be the main source of conflict in the post-Cold War world, although nation states will remain. Future wars would not be fought between countries, but between cultures. Moreover, he saw in Islamic extremism the biggest threat to world peace, stating that conflict lines on a global scale are first and foremost those

[2] Generally speaking, one divides two versions of secularization theory. The first one refers to Max Weber (1864-1920), who is considered to be one of the founders of sociology in Germany; the second one is attached to Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who founded similarly the academic discipline of sociology in France. Whereas Weber argues that religion finds its place in private spaces and turns into a relic of the past, Durkheim comes to the conclusion that modernization would result in religion's form, rather than in the death of God (Fiedler 2003).

between the Islamic and non-Islamic world, which have shaped the history of conflict for centuries (Huntington 1993: 22-49).

Events like the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979; the election of US-president Ronald Reagan with the large support of evangelical Christians, Catholics, Jews and Mormons in 1981; the rise of the Hindu-nationalist BJP party in the 1980s and the religious-political Northern Ireland conflict are only a few examples of the global resurgence of religion into politics and the rise of religious nationalism, not only in non-Western contexts. At the latest, the Al-Qaida-terroristic attacks of 2001 seemed to back up his theory. Yet, twenty years after his publication, his idea can be identified as an idea of the 20th century, as Huntington divides the world in nine civilizations based mostly along religious lines: The Western civilization (consisting of Europe, USA), the Islamic, Confucian, Latin-American, etc. I argue that these block thinking patterns of the 20th century fail at addressing the complexity of the interlinked and globalized world driven by accelerated neoliberalism in the 21st century. Still, religion can be perceived as a key reason for conflict. A more current example for the dynamic roles of religion in politics is Turkey's application for full EU membership since 2005: the political debate about the cultural differences between Muslim majority Turkey and Christian majority Europe has driven the whole debate to a great extent. However, the question remains if it is 'pure' religion that fuels or even provokes conflict, or is it rather the combination of a religion-nationalism tandem?

The religion-nationalism interplay spans various spheres – identity, psychology, culture, conflicts and peace are the predominating ones. In an attempt to structure the main components of the interplay between religion and nationalism in this sphere, Abulof presents a matrix consisting of secular nationalism, civil religion, auxiliary religion and 'chosen peoples' which represents a four-type model for the ways in which modern nations relate to their religion in their efforts to justify their claims of statehood.

	Earthly	Transcendental
Secular	Nationalism instead of religion ("Secular Nationalism")	Religion as a resource for nationalism ("Auxiliary religion")
Sacred	Nationalism as a religion ("Civil Religion")	Religion as a source of nationalism ("Chosen Peoples")

Table 2. 1: Four legitimating models of religion and nationalism (Abulof 2014: 518)

According to his analysis, whereas secular nationalism morally avoids religious dimensions, civil religion and auxiliary religion revert to religion's sanctifying capacity or the

transcendental, respectively, and 'chosen peoples' entirely implement religion onto modern politics. In other words, auxiliary religion holds the transcendental as politically subservient to the will of 'the people'; God serves as an important but insufficient legitimating factor. In contrast to this, 'chosen peoples' hold the transcendental sanctification as both necessary and sufficient legitimation. Abulof argues that "this legitimating model walks a fine line between modern nationalism and politicized religion. In a word, when chosen people and their choices are not held to be the primary source of political legitimation, it is doubtful whether we may call this 'nationalism' at all." (2014: 521). This represents an important gap in his own argumentation. As Abulof frames his case study of Judaism and Zionism into the above presented four models of religion and nationalism, he lacks to capture the settler colonialist nature of Zionism.

2.2 The specific case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The view that Zionism's nature goes beyond the scope of nationalism does not merely represent an academic perspective, but was already officially formulated in 1975 by the UN General Assembly, which condemned Zionism as racism (UN Watch 2015). Moreover, a few years later in 1981, the former Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) adopted a charter ratified by 35 member-states that reaffirms the duty of African states to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and Zionism (Oxford Reference, s.a.). Today, the current state of research offers a new understanding of the essence of Zionism, which was achieved by the study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the eyes of settler colonial studies. In contrast to colonialism, which seeks to permanently dominate indigenous communities from a metropolitan center located outside the colonialized area as, for example, Britain's rule in India, settler colonialism seeks to erase indigenous people with the purpose of replacing them with another socio-political body (Veracini 2013: 27), which equals the ultimate goal of ethnic segregation (Pappé 2000: 33).
In other words, as the often-cited Patrick Wolfe puts it, settler colonialism is a structure with no intended end, rather than an event (1999). Following this definition of settler colonialism, Israeli ongoing occupation of Palestine can be categorized as such. Amal Jamal from Tel-Aviv University describes it along similar lines when stating that "Israel was created by a settler-colonial movement of Jewish immigrants" (2011: 48). Israel continues to bereave Arab-Palestinian citizens of not only the status of an indigenous national minority but also of equal

civic status and rights (Ibid.: 48), which is, inter alia, reflected by Israeli property ownership and housing policies[3].

2.3 The Israeli-Palestinian conflict – a religious or political conflict?

Two different perspectives lie at the basis of any analysis and interpretation of the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – a religious approach and a political one. The latter perspective perceives the conflict as a nationalist struggle, consisting mainly of security, sovereignty and self-determination. Within this approach, one must divide diverse interpretations into two approaches: "The old approach sees the conflict as one raging between two national movements with an equal claim for the country and equal blame for the lack of progress, the new ones frame the conflict as one raging between a settler and a native community" (Pappé 2015) and view the conflict through the lens of settler colonialism studies. The old one focusses on the Six-Day-War of 1967 and the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as the beginning of the conflict, whereas the new approach focusses on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 as both a departure point and a subject that has to be addressed in order to achieve peace and reconciliation. In addition to this, the old approach advocates a two-state-solution. In contrast to this, the new one seeks a one-state solution and prefers to focus on decolonization, change of regime and the return of the refugees as means of reconciliation (Ibid.)[4].

In contrast to this, advocates of the religious approach base their argumentation on the fact that the region which is today Israel and Palestine is holy to the three monotheistic world religions Judaism, Islam and Christianity; focussing especially on Judaism and Islam, and see religious motives as the origins of the conflict, often without regarding the political history of Israel and Palestine. Speaking for Judaism and Christianity, the fact that a significant part of Judaic ritual and teachings focusses specifically on the region which is nowadays Israel and

[3] The legal basis of the Israel land policy is made of four columns: The Basic Law establishing the Israel Land Administration (1960), Israel Lands Law (1960), Israel Land Administration (1960) and the Covenant between the State of Israel and the World Zionist Organization (Jewish National Fund, 1960). The State of Israel controls 93% of the total land, that is, either property of the state, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) or the Development Authority (Israeli Land Authority, s.a.).

[4] The commonly accepted two-state solution envisages the creation of two independent states, Israel and Palestine, with Jerusalem as the capital for the two states. This view was already formulated in the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, adopted as Resolution 181 (United Nations 1947). In contrast to this, the one-state solution demands the establishment of one bi-national state of Israel, requiring the abolishment of an exclusively Jewish national identity of Israel as well as the granting of full civil rights for Palestinians (Grinberg 2010).

Palestine forms the basic argument for this religious approach to the conflict. In addition to this, the religious dimension of the conflict also can be observed in political contexts: the primary national founder of the State of Israel and the first Prime Minister of the country Ben-Gurion stated, when speaking to the Peel Commission in 1936, that "the British mandate is not our mandate", but rather "the bible is our mandate" (Abulof 2014: 524). One year later he disclosed "I told the Commission: God has promised Eretz Israel to the Jews. This is our charter. But we are men of our own time, with limited horizons" (Ibid.: 525).

In addition to this, the employment of religious symbols by the Zionists themselves indicates a clear reference to ancient Israel of biblical times, regardless of the fact that Zionism emerged as a predominantly secular and political movement. Furthermore, Jewish settlers who immigrated to Israel after the Six-Day-War in 1967 were largely religiously motivated, as Israel's victory gave rise to a more religious concept of *Eretz Israel*. As will be shown in the analysis in a more detailed way, religion and religious efforts have also had a significant impact in the course of the conflict and have intensified it. The injection of religion in the form of radical groups on the ground rejecting compromise and dialogue for religious reasons can be observed on both sides of the conflict.

When regarding the Palestinian side, the initial response of the Palestinians after the Arab defeat of 1948 and 1967 was secularist and political. The 1948 Palestinian exodus meant the expulsion of almost 800,000 Palestinians (Pappé 2007). His historical analysis shows that the expulsion did not happen on an ad hoc basis, but constituted a systematic ethnic cleansing[5] in accordance with several official plans, namely the Plan Dalet (Plan D) worked out by the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah in Mandatory Palestine in March 1948. The execution of the plan meant the destruction of 531 villages and 11 urban centers as well as several massacres (Ibid.: 11). As a result of this ethnic cleansing before the official establishment of Israel, the newly founded Israel managed to reduce the Palestinian population to under 20% of the total population (Ibid.: 372). Since the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the ongoing colonization of Palestine, the struggle of the Palestinians mainly concerns the status of the refugees and the right to return to their homes or compensation.

[5]Ethnic cleansing has no official definition and has not been recognized as an independent crime under international law. The term originates from the context of the 1990's former Yugoslavia, where a United Nations Commission of Experts defined ethnic cleansing in its final report as "… a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas." (United Nations, s.a.).

Yet, the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the successful attacks by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon against Israel, the growth of Jewish extremism expressed by the rise of power of the Israeli right (Likud party) in 1977, and especially the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the corruption and inefficiency of the Palestinian Authority (PA) provoked the search for alternatives to secularism in Palestine (Abusada 2010). The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist organization founded in 1987 by Sheik Ahmed Yassin (among others), interpreted the Palestinian tragedy in religious-political terms; believing that "Palestinians would only shake off Israeli rule when they return to Islam." (Milton-Edwards 1996: 184-185). Its military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, was founded in the midst of the first Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994) against the Zionist occupation in order to

> contribute in the effort of liberating Palestine and restoring the rights of the Palestinian people under the sacred Islamic teachings of the Holy Quran, the Sunna (traditions) of Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the traditions of Muslims rulers and scholars noted for their piety and dedication (Ezzedeen Al-Qassam Brigades Information Office, s.a.).

Still, this religious discourse holds a nationalist position of Hamas, namely the political goals of stopping the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the establishment of a Palestinian state and a solution to the refugee problem. The Hamas movement was set up in December 1987 as the political wing by the Muslim Brotherhood and represents Palestinian Political Islam[6]. A detailed description of the ideological and political development of Hamas since its creation would go beyond the scope of this chapter.

However, it is important to notice its process of deradicalization during the Oslo period (1993-2000) before the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, which meant the shift towards socio-political activities as a form of struggle against the occupier. The building of an Islamic value system as well as the reestablishment of military and political power were required as a form of protection. Hamas gained popularity among Palestinians as it became an efficient part of the Palestinian social welfare system, providing services that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was unable to provide, as well as a vocal and institutionalized part of the

[6] Political Islam is a modern phenomenon and composed of different movements, which can be global, regional (e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood), or country-specific, such as Hamas (Khan 2014). It means Islam as a political ideology rather than a religious or theological construct. Given the cultural, political, intellectual and socio-economic diversity of the Muslim world, political Islam, like Islam itself, is to a great extent context specific and unique, although there is a common Islamic ground that transcends political boundaries (Ayoob 2014).

Palestinian political landscape. In this sense, Hamas' ideology can be characterized as an "organic interconnection between social and political action" (Roy 2003: 15). Yet, the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 reversed the process of deradicalization within the Islamic movement, which results from increasing brutality of the occupier against the Palestinian society and economy, even though the social core of the Islamic movement remains strong until today (Ibid.).

Unlike Fatah or Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is a Palestinian nationalist organization that does not participate in the political process and seeks to re-establish a sovereign Islamic Palestinian state with the geographic borders of the pre-1948 mandate Palestine; sanctifying the land due to its historical significance to Islam. The highly secretive organization operates underground and receives limited popular support, as it opposes violently the existence of Israel, mostly by carrying out suicide bombings (Fletcher 2008). In addition to this, according to general interpretations of the Quran, Muslims in general are required to not give up any land which was Muslim in the past and was part of *dar-al Islam* and to defend land, if necessary, by force against non-believers and enemies (Khoury 1980: 130-180).

Religious motives also play a role in the conflict outside Israel in another respect: a factor that must not be underestimated is the support of Israel by the United States of America. The central element in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, the axis USA-Israel, is thus not only sustained by the interests in oil and the Jewish lobby in the USA, but also by evangelical convictions, which will be presented in the last chapter of the analysis.

3 The meaning of Judaism and Zionism before and after 1948

3.1 The meaning of Judaism before and after 1948

The question whether Judaism is a religion, a culture, a nationality or a mixture of all three has been central in the development of Jewish thought since the 18th century. In order to address the above raised question, it is crucial to address the major underlying ancient questions concerning Jewish identity, as Judaism is connected to the Jews[7]. It is not possible to refer to the meaning of Judaism without referring to the meaning of Jewish origins and the Jewish people, as the individual understanding of these questions shape world Jewry and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a great extent.

However, by regarding Jewish history, it is impossible to refer to Judaism 'as a whole' because the social and ideological structure of Judaism have changed profoundly through the ages. A holistic approach to the history of Judaism would go beyond the scope of this dissertation. Thus, the most relevant principal points will be briefly outlined, that are needed for the understanding of the analysis. Shakak distinguishes four major phases of history of Judaism: The first phase refers to the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the destruction of the first Temple (587 BCE) and the Babylonian exile. The 'Return from Babylon' (537 BCE) until about 500 CE, the phase of the dual centres Palestine and Mesopotamia, is regarded as the second phase. This phase is characterized by these two autonomous Jewish societies on which 'the Jewish religion' was imposed by the force and authority of the Persian empire. Between this second phase and the third phase of what is called 'classical Judaism', there is a huge time gap of several centuries.

The knowledge about Jews and Jewish society during this time is very slight and based on external non-Jewish sources (Shakak 1997: 44f.). In his bestseller "The Invention of the Jewish People" (2009), Shlomo Sand even goes as far as arguing that a 'race' of Jews never existed and that Jews are descended from converts. As he could not find any literature supporting the forced exile of Jews from the region that is nowadays Israel as a result of the Bar Kokhba, he argues against popular opinion, that Jews were simply not exiled around 70 CE by the Romans. Consequently, he concludes, as the 'nation-race' of Jews never existed, the Jewish Diaspora is

[7] There is not an official definition of who, and who is not 'Jewish'. According to Israeli law a person is considered 'Jewish' if either the mother, grandmother, great-grandmother or great-great-grandmother were Jewesses by religion; or if the person was converted to Judaism in a way satisfactory to the Israeli authorities, and on the condition that the person has not converted to Judaism from another religion, in which case Israel ceases them to regard as 'Jewish'. The first condition represents the definition of the Talmud of 'a Jew', that is the definition followed by the Jewish Orthodoxy. In addition to this, the Talmud and post-Talmudic rabbinic law accept the conversion of a non-Jew to Judaism as a method to becoming Jewish (Shakak 1997: 7-10).

essentially a modern Christian invention. He explains the appearance of millions of Jews in the Mediterranean region and elsewhere with the mass conversions to Judaism among the Khazar in Central Asia and Berber tribes in the Maghreb; stating that Judaism was a very converting religion in the past. The book was translated into several languages and the Khazar thesis gained global attention. In contrast to this view, the Israeli historian Prof. Shaul Stampfer has challenged the Ashkenazi-Khazar theory. He notes that physical evidence is lacking for Sand's thesis and reviews key pieces of historical and geographical evidence which have been cited to support the theory, concluding that there is no reliable evidence and a lack of credible explanations for sources for a conversion *en masse* in the ninth century of the people of the Khazar empire (2013).

Regardless of how one can interpret the ancient Jewish past, one cannot negate the development of different streams within Judaism. Classical Judaism (which corresponds to Orthodox Judaism today), constituting the above mentioned 'third phase of Judaism', is defined of what is called the oral law in form of the Talmud, namely the Babylonian Talmud. The rest of the Talmudic literature, including the so-called Jerusalem or Palestine Talmud, acts as an additional authority. Of greatest importance of Classical Judaism are the legal parts of the Talmud: this part is characterized by a fully comprehensive, extremely authoritarian guidance, which is yet capable of infinite development, without however any change in its dogmatic base. It covers every aspect of Jewish life, both individual and social in considerable detail, including sanctions and punishments provided for every conceivable sin or infringement of the rules (Shakak 1997: 36). Except for very isolated Jewish outposts in India and Ethiopia, the rabbinic interpretation of the Jewish tradition in the Talmud gained authoritative status among Jewish communities worldwide. Although far from monolithic in its characterization of Jewish law, the Talmud sets outer boundaries on the permissible interpretation of Jewish scriptures and as a consequence, imposes a considerable degree of cohesiveness on how faith is understood (Wald; Martinez 2001).

In addition to this, the Jewish festival calendar and Jewish liturgy reflects the memory of this identification symbol for Jews in the whole world. According to traditional Jewish counting, the Tora contains 365 prohibitions, which corresponds to the number of days of the solar year, and 248 laws, which is, according to ancient state of knowledge, the number of limbs of the human body. These symbolic numbers allegorise their universal claim of validity in every sphere of life (Tilly 2006: 22). Furthermore, since the time of the late Roman Empire, Jewish communities had considerable legal powers over their members, which was achieved by rabbinical courts for all kinds of offences (Shakak 1997: 16).

As we have seen, Judaism has historically been public by nature and characterized by law and hence practice. Yet, it became a religion during the fourth phase: The fourth phase means Judaism in the modern age and is characterized by the breakdown of the totalitarian Jewish community and its power, and by the attempts to reimpose it, mainly through Zionism. This phase begins at different times in different places, starting in Holland in the 17th century, in France and Austria (excluding Hungary) in the late 18th century and in most European countries in the middle of the 19th century and, some Islamic countries in the 20th century (Ibid.: 44-45).

This above described last phase of Judaism is also characterized by important developments in Jewish thought. In her book "How Judaism Became a Religion" (2011), Leora Batnitzky specifies that Judaism was pressed into the modern Protestant concept of religion in particular in the German Jewish context, arguing that "it is the clash between the modern category of religion and Judaism that gives rise to many of the creative tensions in modern Jewish thought …" (2011: 1). Batnitzky argues that this clash forced the Jews to deal with the question of their 'religion' and identity and places the main reason for this development in the 'Protestantization' of Judaism in the highly intellectualized tradition of thought of German Judaism, which was influenced by German cultural and philosophical surroundings. Furthermore, she argues that the idea that Judaism is a religion also constituted a cultural and political reaction to the gap between the missing fully integration of Jews in the German society (Ibid.)[8]. Throughout her analysis she thus focusses on German Jewish thinkers such as Abraham Geiger, Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber and Zvi Yehuda Kook and Moses Mendelssohn. The popular idea that Judaism is a religion is usually associated with the latter, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), one of the principle voices of the intellectual and social revolution, the 'Jewish enlightenment' *Haskalah*. He hoped for the synthesis of political emancipation and Jewish loyalty to the idea of being a 'chosen people', an idea which lives in the state mind of Israel until today, which will be shown throughout the analysis of the thesis.

As a reaction to the enlightenment, the so-called Reform Judaism developed in Western Europe and the USA from the 19th century on. The vision of these Jews was the integration of Jews in the respective state and society. These Jewish enlighteners rejected many areas of Jewish tradition and renounced most of the ritual regulations. The idea was to define Jews as ethnic-national members of the respective country of residence, but with their own religion. In other words, they wanted the Jew to become a citizen of modern national states of Mosaic faith;

promoting the denationalization of Jewish identity. Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), widely considered as one of the most significant political philosophers of the 20th century, argued along the same lines as Batnitzky and rejected the Reform movement, which, in her eyes, tried to

> dissolve the Jewish people into a "Mosaic confession," but destroyed the meaning of the legends of its foundation. … This "Reform" which ruthlessly and nonchalantly removed all national, all political meaning from the tradition, did not reform the tradition- it has in fact proved to be its most powerful preserver- it merely robbed it of its living meaning (Arendt 2007: 149f.).

The vision of the Reformists seemed to work in particular in the German Empire, where the emancipation of the Jews (German: "die Judenemanzipation") was expressed in their official legal equalisation since 1871. However, despite the fact that this meant a new and large participation and assimilation level in the German society for Jews in economy, science and culture, hostility towards Jews continued (Tilly 2006).

In contrast to this, the traditionalists remained dominant in the Orient and in Eastern Europe. Orthodox Jews did not tolerate any deviations of the laws of the Torah, which also can be largely explained when regarding the history of the development of European nation states. Whereas Western Europe had moved away from the feudal medieval structure by the end of the eighteenth century and developed towards unified and sovereign states, the Habsburg, Ottoman and Russian empires had absorbed all the previously independent countries of eastern and central Europe and re-established feudal structures. They remained legally, politically and theologically defined as members of the Jewish community; explaining the fact that the idea of Jewish religion was, to a great extent, irrelevant to eastern European Jews. Against both tendencies – the national assimilation of Reform Judaism and the insistence of Orthodox Jews on Jewish traditions – modern political Zionism emerged from 1897 on (Ibid.).

Before the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948, the idea of Jewish nationalism in the form of Zionism was largely rejected among European Jews. Religious leaders rejected it as a form of secularization and modernization. Influential authorities like Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch stated:

> Not in order to shine as a nation among nations do we raise our prayer and hopes for the reunion in our land, but in order to find a soil for the better fulfilment of our spiritual vocation in that reunion and in the land which was promised, and given, and again promised for our observance of the Torah. But this very vocation obliges us, until God shall call us

> back to the Holy Land, to love and to work patriots wherever He has places us, to collect all the physical, material and spiritual forces and all that is noble in Israel to further wealth of the nations which have given us shelter. It obliges us, further, to allow our longing for the far-off land to express itself only in the mourning, in wishing and hoping; and only through the honest fulfilment of all Jewish duties to await the realization of this hope. But it forbids us to strive for the reunion or the possession of the land by any spiritual means (Hirsch 1962 apud Rabkin 2011: 150).

This shows that the Jewish attachment to the land of Israel is first and foremost a spiritual one. Throughout the centuries, rabbinical authorities strictly prohibited a *en masse* return to the land of ancient Israel, which was regarded as an act against God's will. The restoration of the Jewish people to the land would only occur with the coming of the Messiah and the onset of the Messianic Era (Rosen 2016). The understanding of this spiritual connection is fundamental for the understanding of political Zionism as the rejection of Jewish tradition, in particular after 1948, as it sought to create a new Jew and a new kind of Judaism.

On the other hand, secular Jews feared that these new nationalist ideas would raise questions about the Jews' loyalty to their own nation-states and would thus increase anti-Semitism (Pappé 2017: 24). However, it is in the context of the state of Israel, which was originally rejected by most Jews, including those identifying with Rabbinic Judaism, that new and initially marginal streams of Judaic interpretation[9] embraced Zionism and the idea of armed struggle that it embodies (Rabkin 2011: 144). However, after the 'War of Independence' of 1948 in the Zionist vocabulary and the Nakba in the Palestinian one, the previous anti-Zionist attitude of many Jews shifted.

3.2 The meaning of Zionism before 1948

As Pappé puts it, "Zionism was, in a nutshell, a movement asserting that the problems of the Jews of Europe would be solved by colonizing Palestine and creating a Jewish state there." (2017: 18). These ideas formed themselves in the 1860s in many places in Europe, inspired by the Enlightenment, the 1848 'Spring of Nations' and later on by socialism (Ibid.). The Jewish enlightenment meant the revival of the Hebrew language and the emergence of a few Proto-Zionists who were more deeply affected by nationalist tendencies and associated the revival of Hebrew with nationalism in their writings; nurturing the redefinition of Judaism as a national

[9] The development of this movement, which is referred to as religious Zionism or National Judaism will be discussed in the following analysis.

movement and the need to colonize Palestine in order to return the Jews to the ancient homeland from which they had been expelled by the Romans in 70 CE. This shows that Zionism underwent a transformation from an intellectual and cultural exercise into a political movement.

Pappé sees the reason for this rise of political Zionism in the extreme wave of anti-Jewish persecution in Russia in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and in the rise of the deeply-rooted anti-Semitic nationalism in the West of Europe, in particular in Germany and France (Ibid.: 18). This first phase in the history of Zionism was at its peak with the acts and works of Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), the founder of the World Zionist Organization[10]. The following part of the introduction of his pamphlet "Der Judenstaat" (literally *The Jews' State*, commonly translated as *The Jewish State*) published in 1896 shows that Zionism understood itself already in its origins as a national project, which interprets Judaism in nationalist terms:

> I think the Jewish question is no more a social than a religious one, notwithstanding that it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council (Herzl 1896 apud The Jewish Virtual Library, s.a.).

Although there were heterogeneous convictions and objective targets from the very beginning (religious, democratic, socialist, revisionist), the nationalistic core propagated was the dominating element (Brenner 2002: 76-78). However, the marginality of the Zionist movement within Judaism until the Holocaust illustrates the problem of a national movement, whose nation cannot understand its cohesion and regarded Judaism as Diaspora-based religion. Before the Shoah, neither rabbis nor traditionalists or other deeply rooted levels of society sympathized with Zionism in the beginning and it was a minority opinion. As Pappé shows, the anti-Zionist criticism was particularly strong in Germany, where Reformists publicly rejected the idea of a Jewish nation, proclaiming themselves as "Germans of the Mosaic faith" and defining themselves as a religious community and no longer a nation (2017: 26).

Furthermore, in this context it is important to briefly mention the development of a counter-ideology to Zionism, pleading for a national Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora. Partially influenced by post-colonial Diaspora-discussions and culture theories, Diaspora-nationalism

[10] The World Zionist Organization was founded at the initiative of Theodor Herzl at the First Zionist Congress which took place in August 1897 in Basle, Switzerland. The World Zionist Organization seeks to promote Zionism and the Zionist idea and the Zionist enterprise through Israel Education, in accordance with the principles articulated in the Jerusalem Program (World Zionist Organization, s.a.).

nowadays is experiencing new dimensions reinforced by the ambivalent attitude of many Jews concerning Israel's occupation policy. Systematically formed Diaspora-positions only originated in the secularized context in modernity. The first plea emerged approximately at the same time as Zionism. As contrary as the two visions are, they are both answers to European nationalism and its dealing with minorities. Both movements rejected the Western emancipation model, which guaranteed equal rights for Jews only as individuals and called for the abandonment of the group identity as a condition for societal acceptance.

Whereas the Zionists strived for a Jewish version of the national state, the Russian-Jewish Historian Simon Dubnov (1860-1914) advocated a Jewish nation, that does not define itself territorially or nationally. With his concept of Jewish autonomy, he holds a third position between assimilation and Zionism, which both lead to the overcoming of the Diaspora in opposing ways. By conceiving national consciousness as the core of collective identity, Dubnov's view is part of the dominating discourse of his time. However, his idea of a 'spiritual nation' precludes the prevailing discourse. In the Dubnov model, the spiritual nation develops whose strength lies exactly in its non-territoriality. Hence, its cultural, religious and social activities guarantee the preservation of the collective (Zeller 2006: 1-5).

Despite these various anti-Zionist opinions, Zionism became an internationally recognized movement that did not wait for international recognition, which was the result of Herzl's and like-minded Jewish leaders. The first Aliyah, a term used to describe the first wave of Zionist immigration between 1882-1904 to Ottoman Palestine, was composed of mostly Eastern European Jews who had developed a similar notion like the Zionists and laid the cornerstone for Jewish settlement in Palestine. The second Aliyah (1905-1914) was different in the way that it mainly consisted of communists and socialists who shifted the focus from the Jewish problem to the idea of the promotion of Communism and Socialism through collective settlement in Palestine (Pappé 2017: 18). As the Zionist movement needed increasingly strong support for its idea of the 'Jewish return to Israel' as the result of increasing scepticism among the Palestinians, the attitude of Britain became the most important one. Pappé explains that "in many ways, the strategic imperial impulse of Britain to use the Jewish return to Palestine as a means of deepening London's involvement in the 'Holy Land' coincided with the emergence of new cultural and intellectual visions of Zionism in Europe." (Ibid.: 19).

Again, Christianity played an important role for the rise of Zionism in this context. The Reformation, the religious revolution that took place in Western church in the 16th century, resulted in the production of a notion of the end time and the need for Jews to return to Palestine, in particular among Protestants. This notion did not rest on a religious level, but turned into a

concrete program of colonialization and dispossession in the Victorian Britain in the 1820s. Both Christians and Jews saw the colonialization of Palestine as an act of return and redemption: anti-Semitism and the Christian millenarian concept built an alliance, which was politically reflected by the fact that arguments for a greater British presence in Palestine were both religious and strategic. With the support of the United States, "the blend of religious fervor and reformist zeal" (Ibid.: 13) finally lead to the Balfour Declaration in 1917. With this public pledge included in the terms of the British Mandate for Palestine after World War I, Britain declared officially its aim and support to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. By 1945, Zionism had attracted more than half a million settlers to Palestine, which counted about two million people at that time and the settlers managed to build a state within a state, while still being a minority (Ibid.: 48).

4 Analysis

In order to understand the relationship between Zionism and Judaism today one must understand the ideological and political origins of the different movements related to Zionism and Judaism. I choose to present the relationship between Judaism and Zionism inside Israel by referring to four key phenomena, which are tied to the following personalities: the first one is David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), Israel's first Prime Minister, representing traditional Zionism as advocated by Theodor Herzl (see chapter 3.2). Secondly, I will refer to the orthodox rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi in pre-state Israel, who is considered one of the fathers of religious Zionism (Eisen, s.a.). His son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook (1891-1982) is the third key personality, as his radical messianic interpretations of his father's theology laid a significant foundation for the colonialization of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by religious settler movements, which is highly connected to the phenomenon of Jewish fundamentalism (Lustick 1988). As will be shown throughout the analysis, the increasing influence of radical religious Zionism lead to an ideological change of traditional Zionism itself, which will be partly presented by referring to the fourth key personality, the current Israeli Prime Minister and Chairman of the right-wing Likud party Benjamin Netanyahu. Afterwards, I will present the interconnection between Christian Zionism outside Israel and traditional Judaism, which is linked to the Judaization of the conflict in both inside and outside Israel.

4.1 Orthodox Judaism and traditional Zionism

As has been shown, the predominate attitude of the vast majority of all streams within Judaism before the establishment of Israel in 1948 was anti-Zionist (see chapter 3.1). The contradiction and dilemma of Zionism itself can be best summarized as follows:

> If Zionism is the heir to the Jewish tradition then by that definition it inherits a history and culture of passivity, self-abnegation, humility and hosts of traits which Zionism seeks to negate. But if Zionism constitutes a revolt against the tradition, what is the basis of the legitimate right to speak on behalf of all Jews (Liebman, Don-Yehiya 1983 apud Cole 2000: 124).

Thus, as it was difficult to legitimate Zionism on a secular level, Zionists turned to Judaism, in particular after 1948, which was a strategy for the recruitment of religious and traditional Jews for the Zionist project (Abulof 2014; Pappé 2017). This necessarily implied for the secular

Zionists the confrontation with the religious Orthodox Jews on a political level. The struggle between a secular constitution and the Jewish religious law *Halakah* was foreseen by Ben-Gurion. He came to an agreement in June 1947 with the Orthodox religious leaders and parties, agreeing to accede to *Halakah* in a fundamentally secular state and respecting certain religious principles. On the other side, rabbis surrendered authority in fields they had interpreted for centuries, such as commerce, contracts and the regulation of the workplace. The status quo meant the setting of forth principles that have been in effect through the present. One of the most significant examples are marriage and divorce among Jews, which were surrendered to rabbinical courts while promising that there would be no civil marriage[11]. Furthermore, it gave rabbis full autonomy over education for their communities, rather than insisting on mandatory common schooling for all (Troen 2016: 156-158)[12].

Still, it was difficult to separate religious and secular elements from each other, which can be illustrated with the example of Sabbath: To the observing Jew, the Sabbath is a profound expression of Jewishness. To the secular, European-orientated Zionist, it was indeed a major Jewish contribution to civilization, but its strict observance was placed in the religious sphere. In this case, like in many other cases, the religious sector won the upper hand (Rubinstein 1967: 110f.). Furthermore, the status quo served as a shield with which to protect religious interests, but it has never prevented them from obtaining pro-religious concessions (Ibid.: 144).

However, the Zionists managed to create a, at first sight, democratic frame for Israel which served as a cloak for their colonialization project: Speaking in late 1947, after the United Nation's vote for partition to a meeting of Mapai[13], Ben-Gurion stated that the non-Jews of Israel will be equal citizens in all spheres of life. Yet, in another conversation with Arab intellectual Ibrahim Shabath, he emphasized that minority citizens must admit the fact that they live in a Jewish country, in a country only of the Jews (Halmai 2016: 3). Religious freedom and pluralism is theoretically reflected in the Declaration of Independence of May 14th 1948. In the last part of the declaration that sets the basic values, is it declared that the state

> will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective

[11] Although in recent years there have been many attempts to change the law and introduce civil marriage in Israel, until the present day, civil marriage in Israel is non-existent (Family Law in Israel, s.a.).

[12] The impact of religious education was and still is crucial for the ideological change of traditional Zionism, as will be shown throughout the analysis.

[13] Established in 1930, Mapai was the largest and most dominated party in the political scene and was very involved in the lives of citizens, inter alia providing social services such as a health fund, sports club, and youth movement. In 1968 it ceased to exist as a separate party after having merged with Ahdut HaAvoda and Rafi to the Israeli Labor Party (The Israeli Democracy Institute, s.a.).

> of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, s.a.).

Yet, these formulations remained in the Declaration of Independence and leave space for individual interpretation. Until today, Israel does not have a written constitution. Since later the two Basic Laws with quasi constitutional status lacked the mentioning of freedom of religion, the Israeli Supreme Court read freedom of religion in the term 'dignity', which is protected by Basic Law concerning Human Dignity and Liberty of 1992 (Halmai 2016: 2)[14].

Summarizing, the status quo presented the solution for the Zionists to gain the support of the orthodox population groups, as they were dependent on their endorsement, or, as Halmai put it: "… he [Ben-Gurion][15] did so in order to enhance legitimacy of the Jewish nation-state in the eyes of its Jewish citizens and of Diaspora Jews, and also to preserve Jewish unity." (2016: 2). However, Rubinstein noted that instead of postponing the unavoidable secular-religious struggle by observing the status quo, the opposite happened: "The status quo has been honoured more in the breach than in the observance, and the much-dreaded *Kulturkampf* is a constant feature of the public scene." (1967: 113)[16].

Moreover, David Ben-Gurion envisaged a cultural and modern 'new' and 'improved' version of Judaism that would be built on a secularized return to the Bible, rather than a religious and traditional one as "the aim was to create a modern culture with a useable past." (Troen 2016:155). This introduction of a new Jewish culture was pressed ahead by one of the most influent pre-state Zionist thinkers, Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg (primarily known by his Hebrew name Ahad Ha'am) and his followers, who sought to create a literary base for the national education of a new, secular Jewish personality, which was the result of his effort to find a synthesis between Judaism and European philosophy. Ahad Ha'am became the key figure of what is referred to as cultural or spiritual Zionism, the counter pole to Herzl's political Zionism (Jewish Virtual Library, s.a.). In contrast to political Zionism, cultural Zionism did not require

[14] Until today, the Knesset (the Israeli unicameral national legislature) has enacted eleven Basic Laws, which comprise the existing partial written constitution. The early Basic Laws established the branches of government (executive branch, parliament and courts), basic state institutions, such as the president and army and basic components of democracy, such as elections (International Labour Organization, s.a.).

[15] Brackets inserted by author for clarification.

[16] The deep religious-secular divide of Israeli society was also sharpened because of the ideological change of traditional Zionism and will be presented in a more detailed way in the last chapter of the analysis.

a Jewish state, but it explicitly allowed its creation at the right time. Ahad Ha'am advocated the creation of Eretz Israel as a renovated Jewish cultural and spiritual center that would empower Jewish life in the Diaspora. His ideas did not only influence contemporary thought but had also a concrete impact on the ground (Arkush 2014: 1-4). As a result of the cultural Zionists' efforts, new forms of the texts of the Jewish religious tradition were omnipresent, with the Hebrew Bible being the core part for the construction of a new Jewish identity. The transformation of a national religious culture to one rooted in secularity was also expressed by the incorporation of tradition in national public life. The state's symbols, the seven branched candelabrum, the flag in form of a prayer shawl, the six-pointed 'star of David' and biblical days of rest, holidays and celebrations of ancient, national myths and heroic figures all manifested the conversion of a national religious culture to one rooted in secularity (Troen 2016: 154-158).

In this context, it is important to notice that the role of the Bible within Jewish life provided one more clear difference between Judaism and Zionism. In the Jewish world before the Zionist era, the leading rabbis treated the political history contained in the Bible and the Jewish sovereignty over the land of Israel as marginal topics in their spiritual world of learning. The holy writings concentrating on the relationship between believers, and in particular on their relation to God, were the central study topic and characterized the nature of Judaism in general (Pappé 2017:30). The secular Zionists, however, subscribed to the Bible as legitimising Zionism and Jewish sovereignty in Palestine: "What served in the Diaspora as an impressive text that inspired longing and kindling the imagination became in Palestine the link that connected the people with its land" (Shapira 2004 apud Abulof 2014: 524).

In addition to this, the new Jewish culture was characterized by the revival of the Hebrew language, which meant the conversion from a sacred language of Judaism to a spoken and written language in Israeli daily life, a process that started with the first Aliyah in Palestine in the second half of the 19th century when Jews started to use Hebrew as lingua franca (Parfitt 1972: 237-250). It is important to notice that this conversion of the language, often regarded as a "modern miracle" (Hofman; Fisherman 1971: 204), was a key element of early Zionist policies: the most essential element of the national religious culture is the Hebrew culture, as modern Hebrew undoubtedly resonates with the three-thousand-year-old literary tradition (Liebman; Don-Yehiya 1983 apud Troen 2016: 155)[17].

[17] The underlying reasons for the choice of the Hebrew language for the Zionist project are grounded in the fact that Zionists regarded other languages spoken by Jews as languages created out of oppression, whereas Hebrew constituted a language from the days before European oppression of the Jews. Yiddish, the first language of the vast majority of Ashkenazi Jews, was seen as the language of

4.2 Early religious Zionism and Jewish Messianism

As has been shown, the Zionists selectively used Judaism on a political and cultural level for the colonization of Palestine; regarding Judaism as an auxiliary religion and resource (see chapter 2.1., Table 1). Yet, it is important to notice that the idea of the Zionist project also fell on a fertile ground for a small minority of leading rabbis who laid the foundation for the important national religious wing of Zionism even before the creation of Israel in 1948 (Pappé 2017:29), an ideology combining Zionism with Orthodox Judaism which the New Historians refer to as 'religious Zionism'.

Like anti-Zionism, religious Zionism was guided by rabbis in the Jewish community, almost always by Orthodox ones (Novak 1991:24). However, in contrast to anti-Zionism, religious Zionists supported a return to the 'Promised Land' through human effort (Cohen and Susser 2000). Early politically moderate religious Zionists were best known as the Mizrachi movement (1902-1957). The movement embraced Zionism and the Jewish national project from the very beginning in the hope that the Zionist project could accelerate the coming of the Messiah by establishing a divine polity in the 'Promised Land'. Its political moderation became apparent in the discussion of the Uganda-Plan (1903), which envisaged a part of British East Africa as a Jewish homeland: a majority of the Mizrachi was in favour of it (Abulof 2014: 524).

Founded by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, the Mizrachi movement supported Zionism to the extent that it remained a political ideology which aimed to bring Diasporic Jews to Palestine and aimed at promoting Jewish religious education within the framework of Zionism[18]. Its spiritual leader and most influent rabbi defending early messianic religious Zionism was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. The first Chief Rabbi of British Palestine regarded the secular Zionists as craftsmen who prepared the coming of the Messiah by establishing the state of Israel. He argued that Zionists were in fact the unknowing tools of God, and as such, were accelerating the process of redemption by settling once more in *Eretz Israel*, contributing in this way to the realization of a spiritual and religious Zionism. Kook negated the diasporic nature of Judaism and believed that a complete Jewish life outside Israel is not possible (Jones 1999). The resulting arising question is, how it can be possible that this intended process of redemption can be built on a secular movement, whose goal does not lie in the return to religion but in the relativization of Jewish tradition in secular state?

Judaism in exile and was rejected by many leaders of the Zionist movement, as it is closely related to Germanic and Slavic languages (Freeburg 2013: 10-13).

[18] Today, Mizrachi is a global religious Zionist movement based in Jerusalem with branches across the globe. Being part of the World Zionist Organization, it offers various leadership programs to train the young generation (Mizrachi World Movement 2018).

Kook resolved this question by presenting a cabbalistic dialectic interpretation of Jewish history, claiming that the core of secular Zionism rises from Judaism itself. In this sense, he argued that spirituality is an integral part of the identity of every Jew that cannot be isolated: his doctrine of redemption places the collective redemption of the Jewish people in the center. By drawing special attention to the religious value of the unity of the Jewish people, the fulfilment of the messianic process is understood as a collective mission for the Jewish people. Furthermore, Kook argued that even a life in sin and against *Halakah* would not exclude secular Jews of the community: the subjective self-perception of the Zionists would be insignificant, because the real meaning of one's action could remain hidden: "Even those who do not know the ultimate goal of the building can carry the bricks, they may even direct the work, but when the inner and real purpose of the building is revealed, all becomes clear." (Ravitzky 1990: 21). Here, Kook's optimistic interpretation of Zionism becomes apparent, as he saw the history of the Jewish people advancing. His messianic theology was the basic teaching of the first religious Zionist school in Jerusalem, Yeshiva Mercaz Harav Kook, which he established in 1924 (Mercaz HaRav Kook, s.a.).

The Mizrachi ideology reflects this thinking: It opposes Zionism as a purely secular movement, and claims that the spiritual and moral values of Europe only have limited value, believing "that the Jewish nation without religion is a body without a soul, that religion and nation constitute and indissoluble unity, … that religious faith without the national spirit was only 'half Judaism'" (Kaye 2013:11). Pappé sees in this development one of the great successes of the secular Zionist movement, as the creation of the religious Zionism component meant the recruitment of rabbis to legitimize Zionist occupation: "These rabbis accepted the secular Zionist idea to turn the Bible into a book that stands by itself and conceded that a superficial knowledge of it became a core of one's Jewishness even if all the other crucial religious imperatives were ignored." (2013). However, it is important to notice that messianic thought itself is not a stream within Judaism that originated with secular modern Zionism. The messianic idea is a central foundation of traditional Judaism, but it was linked to a passive waiting of the Jewish people for heavenly redemption for a long period of time (Don Yehiya 2004: 241).

4.3 Radical religious Zionism, Jewish messianism and Jewish fundamentalism

4.3.1 Radical religious Zionism and Jewish messianism pre-1967

After Abraham Isaac Kook's death in 1935, his son Zvi Yehuda Kook was his ultimate successor in the spiritual leadership of the yeshiva. Whereas Abraham Isaac Kook had surrendered politics to the secular Zionists, Kook junior and his followers used his theology to encourage Jewish people to possess the whole of the land that had been biblical Israel. Zvi Yehuda Kook believed in the sacred nature of the Jewish state and insisted that Jews could not find safety until they had conquered all of the ancient territory, arguing that this would be a condition for the next and decisive stage in the bringing of the Messiah which has to be achieved (Hertzberg 1996:40). Moreover, as Lustick shows, this radical view implies that the Arabs do not have the right to the 'land of Israel': "The Jews are authorized by the living God and Creator of the universe as a legitimate, eternal people with unalienable rights to the entire Land of Israel. The Palestinians have absolutely no legitimate claim to nationhood or any part of the country." (1988: 77). Thus, the Arabs would have three possibilities: "to flee, to accept Jewish rule or to fight" (Ibid.: 77).

Even if religious Zionism and Jewish messianism in the sense of Zvi Yehuda Kook have been peripheral to traditional Zionism for decades and only reflected the view of a minority, one should draw attention to the fact that their radical opinions had a wide influence in the religious educational system of the yeshivas: yeshiva circles constitute in many ways a self-sufficient subculture that is characterized by a feeling of difference from other people and a powerful sensation of superior religious status. This dissociation is evidenced by the fact that the social scope of the ethical works arising from yeshiva circles is largely restricted to orthodox circles, as they are concerned with religious problems rather than worldly ones (Deshen 1978: 152). Don-Yehiya goes even further when characterizing the Yeshiva Mercaz HaRav as an all-inclusive-life-framework which is part of the isolationist strategy adopted by Haredi Jewry in its attempt to fight the influences of modern secular society (2004: 248).

This early first wave of radicalization within religious Zionist education goes along with the change of the idea of messianism. Don-Yehiya draws attention to the fact that it must be differentiated between two types of messianic ideologies. According to his analysis, the first type of messianism can be considerated as moderate as it defines its objectives in messianic terms and chooses its means according to pragmatic considerations. In contrast to this, the second type selects both its goals and means on the basis of messianic criteria. This second radical type of messianism is reflected in the perception of Zionism as the beginning of redemption and led many religious Zionists to the conclusion that any retreat from the Jewish

claim to the whole Land of Israel is a kind of retreat from the divinely inspired process of redemption (2014: 241-247). Of course, one has to take into account that neither religious political movements nor religious ideologies fit entirely in a theoretic drawer. Nevertheless, the previously presented two different approaches of messianism by rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and his son can be applied to Don-Yehiya's concept.

4.3.2 Radical religious Zionism and Jewish Fundamentalism post-1967

Against this background it is striking that until today, Western mainstream media tends to ignore this crucial impact of the decade-long ideological path making for political radicalization by Zvi Yehuda Kook. The Six-Day War[19] is commonly perceived as the principal reason for a sudden change of the mindset of religious Zionists, detached from the ideological context. Indeed, the vast majority of historians and scholars agrees on the fact that the war was a key driver for the creation of settler movements and the radicalization of religious Zionists (Lustick 1988; Abulof 2014; Shakak 2004). The detailed presentation of the motives of the war would go beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to regard the existential fears which were propagated among Jews shortly before the June War. Israeli newspapers such as the leading daily Haaretz explicitly linked Egyptian president Nasser to Hitler. Although this comparison was controversial, by referring to Nasser as 'Hitler of the Nile', traumatic memories of the Holocaust which until then had been widely repressed in public space were successfully recalled (Shlaim 2004: 670).

The political result of Israel's miraculous' victory of the Six-Day War in 1967 was the extension of Israeli power to the borders of the biblical Israel and far beyond, including the capture of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and East Jerusalem. Thus, in religious Zionist circles, the June War was interpreted as signifying divine intervention in accelerating the process of redemption.

The direct offspring of the Six-Day War was the Land of Israel Movement (LIM), which Sprinzak classifies as a newly born "ultranationalist creature composed of religious fundamentalists, military hard-liners, and labor settlement fanatics" (1989: 173). It culminated

[19] The Six-Day War, also called June-War or Third Arab-Israeli War took place from June 5-10 in 1967 between Israel and its Arab neighbors Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Within three days the Israeli had achieved the victory on the ground. The Arab countries' losses in the conflict were huge in comparison to Israel's. The War also marked the beginning of a new phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since it created hundreds of thousands of refugees and brought more than one million Palestinians in the occupied territories under Israeli rule (Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.a.)

to the proposition that under no condition should Israel respond to an Arab proposal for peace by territorial concessions (Ibid.: 173). Outside Israel, the war also reinitiated the search of Jewish identity among Jews all over the world, which saw themselves confronted with the challenge of re-examining their own individual relationship to the State of Israel. At the same time, a new sensitivity and openness to discuss the significance of religion for the State of Israel among 'secular' circles developed (Cohen et al. 1968). Troen's analysis of secular Judaism in Israel sheds new light on the English meanings of 'secular' and 'religious' and allows a more nuanced picture of secular Judaism in the case of Israel. He draws attention to the fact that Israeli Jews who consider themselves as 'secular' nevertheless 'do' Judaism and hold strong ideas about Jewish tradition that one would not categorize as 'secular'. According to data published in 2012 by the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) Guttman Center for Surveys, 80% of Israeli Jews state that they believe in God, 67% believe that the Torah and the precepts are God-given and 56% believe in life after death. These answers demonstrate the deeply-held beliefs of 'secular' Jews. Furthermore, the actual behaviour of the majority of secular Jews includes expressions which are associated with the practice of religious traditions: 76% eat kosher at home and 70% believe that Jews are the chosen people (2016: 156).

Whereas the miraculous Six-Day War was perceived by radical religious Zionists as a huge step towards redemption, the Yom Kippur War implied the opposite. The war broke out on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur, which fell on the 6th October, 1973. Israel was attacked on two fronts. The Egyptian army attacked Israel along the Suez Canal in the south and the Syrian forces advanced through the Golan Heights in the north. The Israeli army recorded its severest losses since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Hechter 2003: 442). The war could only be explained as the final attempt of the non-Jews to stop the coming redemption of the Jews and spurred the settlers more than ever (Jones 1999)[20].

The most significant example which serves for the demonstration of the rising power of radical religious settler movements after these two wars is Gush Emunim. When examining literature on the "post-1967 spearhead of religious Zionism" (Abulof 2014: 528), it is striking that historians are divided over the use of terms. Their historical analyses show that the boundaries between the concepts of radicalism, extremism, fundamentalism and radical religious Zionism are floating. For example, whereas Ravitzky classifies Gush Emunim as an exclusively messianic movement (1996), Lustick categorizes the 'Block of the Faithful' as

[20] However, in this context, it is important to highlight that not all religious Zionists have turned to messianism. Apart from religious motives, economic and security reasons also played and still play a significant role, in particular for the settlers who relocated to the West Bank for material benefits (Abulof 2014: 528).

fundamentalist organization (1988). In addition to this, the used theoretic terms are often not defined by the respective authors, or they are based on different definitions. Another problem concerns the relation between the terms, as some authors use all of them as synonyms. The difficulty to capture the nature of this and other radical movements terminologically can be explained by the fact that the radicalization within religious Zionism was not a linear process and various factors are overlapping each other (Don-Yehiya 2014: 239). Furthermore, the respective methodological focus as well as the unavoidable subjectivity of the authors provide other possible reasons. Yet, according to Deshen, the names and the labels of the various religious movements in Israel are submitted to constant change, while the essential phenomena remain stable (1978: 148).

However, for the purpose of avoiding confusion about the theoretical meaning of the terms, I will briefly present Ian Lustick's definition of fundamentalism, whose theoretic approach to the term I chose to adapt, as most New Historians share this approach, at least when analysing post-1967 settler movements. According to Lustick's analysis, Jewish fundamentalist thinking is grounded in seven basic beliefs, which can be summarized to five basic beliefs that are partly linked to each other. First of all, he presents the belief of the idea of the abnormality of the Jewish People which goes along with embracing the notion of Jews as a chosen people. This chosenness implying the transcendental imperatives to which Jews must respond abrogates the moral laws that lie at the ground of 'normal nations'. The cardinal importance of the land of Israel, which, as Lustick illustrates, was even chosen before the people were chosen, and the call of Jewish fundamentalists for sustained political mobilization are related to the belief of Jewish fundamentalists of being God's chosen assistants in the process of building up a messianic kingdom. Secondly, Jewish fundamentalism is characterized by the meaning of Arab opposition to Israel. Fighting the Arabs becomes an imperative and is grounded in the belief that Palestinians have absolutely no legitimate claim to nationhood or to any part of the country. The third basic belief is manifested in Israel's international isolation, which is regarded as proof of Jewish chosenness among fundamentalists and holds the belief of the unending persecution of the State of Israel. Fourthly, Lustick refers to the impossibility of arriving at negotiating peace. Regardless of possible means and structures that could be used to achieve piece (e.g. international mediation, direct contacts between Jews and Arabs), efforts to create peace are bound to fail, as 'real peace' will accompany the completion of Israel's inheritance of the whole land and prepare the coming of the Messiah. The last key element of Jewish fundamentalism is the perception of current history as the unfolding of the redemption process. The cautious Holocaust, the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War constitute the three key events which

serve for a cautious political and historical analysis which can be equated with the interpretation of God's will (Lustick 1988: 72-90). Having defined the term 'fundamentalism' according to Lustick, the analysis will now refer the most relevant phenomena in consideration of the main research question.

Formally established only a few months after the war in 1974 under the slogan 'The Land of Israel, for the people of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel', the main aim of the messianic settler movement Gush Emunim is the reconstruction of a Zionist state, meaning the "Judaization of secular Israel" (Sprinzak 1993:117). Although the movement already had existed from 1967 on, the initial formative phase until 1974 was characterized by the dependence on institutionalized sources of support, namely the Land of Israel Movement, the Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and the Bnei Akiva youth movement[21], as the settlers were still politically unorganized and isolated (Ibid.: 131). The ideological conditions were laid with the previously presented radical messianic teachings of Zvi Yehuda Kook and his followers, which is demonstrated by the settler colonial movement's mission:

> To bring about a major spiritual reawakening in the Jewish people for the sake of the full realization of the Zionist vision, in the knowledge that this vision's source and goal in the Jewish heritage and in Judaism's roots are the total redemption of both the Jewish people and the whole world (Snitkoff, s.a.).

The holiness of the land of Israel plays a central role, as the settlers argue that the land cannot be separated of the people and the Torah, because these three elements form one unit: "The Covenant rests on a triad of relationships: God, land and people. The land is holy because God chooses to dwell in it and chooses that we should dwell in it with him. Take away the theological dimension and Zionism itself turns to ashes." (Lustick 1988: 83). However, the paradox in the messianic ideology of Gush Emunim is grounded in the predetermination of history on the one hand, and in the dependency on the seculars on the other hand. The Gush tried to overcome this paradox by differentiating between the essential holiness of the State and its temporary form of existence, as the holiness of the state is not determined by temporary laws or everyday behaviour of its citizens (Aran 1990: 164). This perception of Israel as 'Holy Land' also explains Gush's greatest problem with modern secular Zionism, namely the Zionist theory

[21] Being the biggest Jewish religious Zionist youth movement today, Bnei Akiva acts in 23 countries worldwide. The mission is to educate Jewish youth around the world to live by the movements ideology of the Torah and to encourage Aliyah by instilling a love for Israel through Zionist education (World Bnei Akiva, s.a.).

of 'Jewish normalization'[22], which is interpreted as humiliation and dishonouring of the Jewish nation. Consequently, the Gush stated that "any framework or international organization whose resolutions imply the humiliation of the honour of Israel has no right to exist and we consequently do not belong there." (Sprinzak 1993: 118).

The example of Gush Emunim shows the recruitment potential of religious Zionism's interpretation of salvation history. The eschatological salvation expectations of the Orthodoxy were turned into an activist program by the settlers. Salvation is not brought about by the Messiah, but is achieved through the acts of the Jewish people. The power of the willingness of the synthesis between Jewish tradition and Zionism is closely connected with the intensification and radicalization by Zvi Jehuda Kook. The profundity and the universalistic dimension which characterizes the thinking of Abraham Isaac Kook have been lost in this process.

Today, the most radical branch of the Gush is known as Ateret Kohanim which advocates the immediate construction of the Third Temple on the present Temple Mount by all available means. Founded in 1978 following the Camp David Accords[23], this movement regards redemption as something humanly achievable and interprets the reunification of Jerusalem as adequate proof for the availability of divine aid for their project. Nonreligious arguments concerning the rights of Arabs or political ones containing concerns regarding Israel's international image as a democracy are repulsed as evidence of absence of faith (Novak 1991: 23). The mission of this religious fundamentalist organization consists in 'judaizing' the illegally annexed East Jerusalem, which basically means the colonialization of East Jerusalem with the considerable financial support of the so-called Jerusalem Reclamation Project (JRP), that represents the Ateret Kohanim in the U.S. (White 2017).

4.4 Jewish fundamentalism and the ideological change of traditional Zionism

As various historians noted, Gush Emunim managed to deeply influence the national institutions, the military and public opinion throughout the 1970s and 80s and contributed to the division of the society as the discussion about Zionism, Judaism and the State of Israel was

[22] The term 'Jewish normalization' here means the idea of a new and improved Judaism and Jew (see chapter 4.1).

[23] I will refer to the impact of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that followed the Camp David Accords of 1978 in a more detailed way throughout the analysis.

brought back on the table of public discussion[24]. Despite not having transformed in a political party, the success of Gush Emunim in creating a strong settlement framework has been due to its capacity to understand and manipulate the existing institutional and political system, rather than opposing it. This meant, among other factors, the support from many sources of the political right, such as right-wing parties like Tehiya and Kach (Newman 1986; Lustick 1988; Aran 1991). The long-term complications of the settlers were tremendous. The settlers lobbied with considerable success for the Israeli government to include the West Bank and the Gaza Strip within their state borders, without their Arab inhabitants, meaning for the Palestinians the granting of fewer rights as well as an increasing political and economic menace (Kimmerling 2003: 281-289). By the early 1980s, the "occupation with-a-smile had turned into hardened military rule." (Ibid.: 288).

Whereas the Labor party under Yitzhak Rabin had rejected the cooperation with Gush Emunim, Likud after 1977 was in a coalition with the National Religious Party[25], also known by its Hebrew acronym MAFDAL, dominated by Gush Emunim[26]. Under this new government, about 100,000 Jews settled down to the occupied territories by the end the 1980s[27] (Lustick 1988: 40). The result was the creation of islands of Jewish life within Palestinian territory, which were created both legally and illegally (Pappé 2017: 36).

Although the first settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza strip were already founded under Labor (Kiryat Arba), the dramatic increase of settlements was connected with the political dominance of Likud under Menachem Begin, which meant the rise of the political right. According to data provided by the Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), approximately 383,000 people were living in the settlements of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. The population in East Jerusalem was numbered 205,220 people at the end of 2014 according to data provided by the Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies. In total, this means that there are an estimated 588,000 settlers in both the 127 legal settlements in the West Bank (these do not include East Jerusalem and settlement enclaves in Hebron) and the circa 100

[24] This success demanded an increased degree of institutionalization. In 1979, the Amana movement was founded in order to organize the settlement project bureaucratically and economically. One year later, the Yesha Council was created, an administrative body that amalgamated the heads of the local authorities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Persico 2017).

[25] Since 1948 the NRP had been a consistent coalition partner in governments led by the Labor, as it "had routinely given support to Labor's foreign and economic policies in return for concessions on matters of religious observance" (Tessler 1986: 12).

[26] Labor can be classified as the hegemonic representation of Zionism from 1882 until its fall from power in 1977, whereas Likud represents traditional Zionism's more ethnocentric and segregative variant (Pappé 2000: 33).

[27] Most of these concentrated in 15 settlements in the metropolitan areas of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (Ibid.: 287).

officially unrecognized 'settlement outposts' located throughout the West Bank (B'Tselem 2017).

Sprinzak places the birth of the political radical right on September 17, 1978, when Begin signed the famous Camp David accords with Egypt on the return of all of the Sinai Peninsula to the Egyptians and initiated the autonomy plan for the Palestinians on the West Bank, which basically meant the beginning of the acknowledgment of the rights of the Palestinians. The right-wing political allies felt betrayed by Begin's conversion from their leader to a man who, in their eyes, prepared a sovereign future Palestinian state, as they were expecting Begin's total commitment to the settlement of all Eretz Israel after the 'earthquake election' resulting in the historic victory of Likud in 1977 after thirty years of Labor dominance (Sprinzak 1989: 172f.).

Today, as Pappé shows, traditional Zionism, that was characterized by its attempt to combine ethnic segregation with an open society, does not exist anymore: the two main political powers Likud and Labor have merged into one major ideological stream, which he titles 'mainstream Zionism'. He shows that mainstream Zionism has been challenged from the Left since the 1980s by post-Zionism[28], which, however, has never constituted a real political challenge to the regime, as its success so far has been in bringing taboo topics of essential relevance on the table, such as the nature of Zionism, the Nakba of 1948 and the refugee problem (2000: 34f.). Inside Israel, the main political challenge to mainstream Zionism today comes from the Right that Uri Ram has termed "Neozionism" (1989 apud Pappé 2000: 34), which interprets Zionism in a violent and extreme way and does not deny the Nakba, but defends it as necessary and justified by turning to the Jews' history and Judaism (Ibid.: 34).

This powerfully demonstrates that the lines between Judaism and Zionism have blurred as a result of the radicalization of the political right and Jewish fundamentalism. In this way, the Gush is one important factor that can be hold responsible for the change of the normative character of Zionism itself, which led to the 'Zionization' of Israeli Jewry:

> The members of Gush-Emunim do not adhere to both Zionism *and* the Torah as usual but rather believe that their Religious and Zionist views are one. The faith-based transformation of the Bloc's supporters can be briefly summarized as a transition from religious Zionism to a Zionist religion. Inspired by Gush-Emunim the Israeli Jewry became of a more Zionist and a lot more Messianic nature. It was only just recently when it seemed that each of these radical orientations is losing its might and potency, and mainly that the

[28] Post-Zionism represents a cultural point of view that strongly criticizes Zionist policy, which is mainly represented by the work of the New Historians, and has been presented in the methodology of the thesis (see chapter 1).

combination of the two has lost some of the hegemonic grip it used to have before (Aran 2014).

Today, the result of the 'Zionization' of the Israeli Jewry is demonstrated by the deep divide among Israeli Jews. Mainstream Western media still tends to reduce the deep divide in Israeli society over political values and religion's role in public life to the differences between Israeli Jews and the Arab Palestinian minority. However, the religious-secular and ethnic chasm between Israeli Jews is crucial to understand, as it shapes the political landscape in Israel today. Generally speaking, the vast majority of Israeli Jews identifies with one of the four categories: Haredi (commonly known as 'ultra-Orthodox'), Dati ('religious'), Masorti ('traditional') or Hiloni ('secular'). These subgroups are highly isolated from each other: A Pew Research Center (PRC) poll (October 2014 - May 2015) demonstrates that close friendships are uncommon and intermarriages are exceedingly rare (not only between a Jew and a partner of non-Jewish faith, but also across Jewish subgroups). Furthermore, the survey takes into consideration the differences among Israel Jews based on age, gender, education and ethnicity as well as other demographic factors. These divisions are also reflected in significant opposing positions on many public policy issues, such as marriage, divorce, religious conversion, military conscription, gender segregation and public transportation. Whereas the majority (76%) of the about 6.3 million Israeli Jews in 2015 sees democracy compatible with a Jewish State, they are deeply divided on the question whether democratic principles or religious law should lead Israeli politics. The vast majority of both Haredi and Dati Jews favours the promotion of Jewish religious beliefs and values by the Israeli government, while secular Jews support a clear separation of religion from government policy (Pew Research Center 2016).

While it is important to highlight that these percentages only constitute approximate information, mainly due to the time gap between the conduction of the survey and the present day, they nevertheless demonstrate important trends and guidelines of interpretation. A closer look on Israeli demographic trends shows, that the *Kulturkampf*, whose political roots have been laid with the status quo agreement, will most likely increase. The orthodox and ultra-orthodox populations are the fastest growing population group in proportion to the total population due to the very high birth rates: 40 births per 1,000 among Haredi women in contrast to 21 births per 1,000 in the general population (Israel Democracy Institute 2016).

4.5 Christian Zionism in the United States

The above outlined process of Zionization has proliferated as well outside Israel, in particular in the United States, where both Christian Zionists and large parts of the American Jewry form the core of what the political scientists John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago) and Stephen Walt (Harvard University) famously titled "The Israel Lobby" in 2006. According to the controversially debated 'Mearsheimer-Walt argument', the lobby consists of a "loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction." (2006: 40). Before referring to the extent of the lobby's political influence on the current Trump administration, it is necessary to comprehend the reasons for the Zionization of these two major groups – the American Jewry[29] and (mostly) evangelical Christians.

With regard to the former group, Friesel describes the meeting of Zionism and American Jewry as a process with two directions when explaining that "Zionism […] became Americanized, and American Jewry […] became 'Zionized' " (1998: 18). Whereas traditional Zionism in Europe found itself in the dilemma of having to find a way to express its acceptance of Jewish diasporic life, while seeking to negate the Diaspora and focussing on the land of Israel at the same time (see chapter 4.1), American Zionism understood the necessity to adapt European Zionism to America's social and political realities and chose to ignore this major component of classical European Zionist thought, namely the negation of the Diaspora. Zionism in America became thus 'Americanized' through the efforts of American cultural Zionists, who believed that the future of the Jewish people would be based on two key centers of Jewish life, one in the United States and one in Palestine. The latter was perceived as the national-cultural Jewish center whose spiritual and intellectual influence would inspire Jews in the Diaspora (whose meaning and scope was limited to America) and contribute to the Jewish nation's spiritual renaissance. The second process that happened on the American Jews' side, namely their 'Zionization', became possible because the culturally increasingly homogeneous American Jewish community was willing to accept the American Zionists' adaption of the principles of European Zionism, as the vast majority of the community identified with the ideological framework developed by the American Zionists (Ibid.: 8-20).

Likewise, the Zionization of evangelical Christians in the United States is also embedded in a broader historic context. Non-Jewish support for the idea of Israel did not only exist long

[29] Four out of five Jews in the world live in either Israel or the United States with approximately six million Jews in each country. While being deeply divided ideologically, a recent study conducted by the Center found that Jewish Americans feel a strong connection with the Jewish state (2017).

before the state's establishment, but was essential for its creation. Pappé draws attention to the fact that Zionism itself was a Christian movement before it became a Jewish one. The European Christians' interest in a 'Jewish return' to Palestine confirmed their beliefs regarding the 'end times' and the second coming of Christ. However, behind these religious convictions lay classical anti-Semitic sentiments, which made the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine attractive, as it killed two birds with one stone: fulfilling religious imperatives and the creation of a Europe without Jews (2014: 32).

The historical continuous connection between Zionism and Christianity was strongest in Great Britain, where the idea of a Jewish homeland in Israel became prominent[30]. Israel's first President Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952) was already aware of the fundamental importance of non-Jewish support for the establishment of Israel and largely responsible for the pro-Zionist attitude of Britain's politicians, public men and officials at his time, which eventually lead into the issuance of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Sharif 1976: 123-127). Throughout the second half of the 20th century, as international power balances shifted due to the Cold War, the importance of European Christian Zionism for the support of Israel decreased, whereas American Christian Zionism and United States' policies in general became essentially important for Israel.

However, by regarding the history of U.S.-Israel relations, it becomes clear that the 'eternal bond', as Netanyahu recently described the relationship between the two states (Tharoor 2018), that is nowadays expressed by the unique political, economic and military closeness of the USA and Israel (Berrigan 2009), was strengthened *peu à peu*. The UN Fourth Geneva Convention adopted in 1949 and signed by Israel in 1951 provided the legal base for international official opposition (including the U.S.) to Israel's post-1967 colonialization of Palestine (Neff, 1994: 53). However, after 1967 the United States committed itself more and more to what Plitnick and Toensing have termed 'the Israel track'. Just like the war fueled radical Jewish messianism inside Israel, it also strengthened Christian Zionists' beliefs outside Israel. Many American Christians clearly favoured the narrative "wherein a plucky people, fleeing horrific persecution and age-old prejudice, made the desert bloom in the Holy Land and stoutly defended their new polity against all comers" (Ibid.: 43). However, at this point in history, the reason for the United

[30] The basis for the concept of a Jewish nationality was formed by the teachings of English Puritan Christians since the 17th century. Puritanism held the perception of Palestine as homeland of the Jews, whose return to Palestine was essential for the second coming of Christ. The dogmas and beliefs which were formed in the course of England's evangelical revival in the beginning of the 19th century can be compared to those of Puritanism in the 17th century (Sharif 1976: 124-125).

States' massive military support in the aftermath of 1967[31] did not lie in the power of a strong domestic religious lobby, but in the fact that a U.S. pro-Israel foreign policy fit into a broader strategy during the Cold War under the Nixon and Reagan administrations[32] (Ibid.: 43- 44).

The political *vocabulary* in the U.S. regarding Israel's settlement policies only changed in 1981, when U.S. President Ronald Reagan declared that Jewish settlements were not illegal but rather "counterproductive" and "obstacles" to the peace process (Neff 1994: 53). During his administration, the major institutions of the formal Israel lobby rose, of which the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is the most dominant one. The Jewish association states on its website that it "urges all members of Congress to support Israel through foreign aid, government partnerships, …" in order to "enhance the security of the United States and Israel" (s.a.). Despite of not directly engaging in campaign contributions, it influences the various pro-Israel PACs that do, and lances campaigns against members of Congress it judges as insufficiently supportive of Israel. In addition to this, the Reagan administration was deeply connected to the Christian Coalition, the leading organization of the Christian Right, of which various Christian and Jewish politicians occupied offices in the following George W. Bush administration as well. Since the 1980s, these two major players have been highly influential, in particular in Congress (Plitnick; Toensing 2007: 44).

Since its development from a grassroots protest movement aiming at installing moral uniformity through law to a coalition partner willing to ensure compliance with moral principles, the Christian Right's influence, after its institutionalization phase from the late 1980s until the early 1990s, has gradually increased within the Republican Party. As its evolution coincided with devolution as political strategy, it managed to attract mainly conservative Christians; creating a close relationship between them and the GOP (Moen 1996: 461- 463). The cooperation between AIPAC and Christian Zionists formally intensified since AIPAC's annual policy conference in 1995, when Jewish leaders and supporters of Israel realized that they were increasingly dependent on the support of evangelical organizations in order to achieve their own goals regarding Israel, and reached common views on the basis of promoting the prosperity of Israel (Dale 2004).

[31] Right after the Six-Day War in 1967, Congress increased aid to Israel by 450% in 1968, when the military aid jumped from $7 million in 1967 to $25 million in 1968 (Wenger 1990: 14).

[32] The Nixon Doctrine in 1969 meant the shift in U.S. foreign policy from ground troops support to economic and military aid for allies facing military threats and influenced the U.S. decision to provide arms for Iran and Israel in the 1970s (Samuels, s.a.). During the Cold War, Israel helped to confine Soviet expansion in the region. Serving as America's proxy after the June War in 1967, the victory meant the defeat of the Soviet-allies Egypt and Syria. Furthermore, Israel provided useful intelligence about Soviet capabilities (Mearsheimer; Walt 2006: 32).

Still, although AIPAC continues to be the largest lobby in Washington, it has been directly challenged by the evangelical lobby Christians United for Israel (CUFI) since President Donald Trump's victory in 2016. The Zionist lobby group was founded in 2006 as "a national association through which every pro-Israel church, parachurch organization, ministry, or individual in America can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to biblical issues" (CUFI, s.a.). These Zionists believe that "Israel's rebirth is part of Biblical prophecy, support its expansionist agenda and think pressuring Israel is contrary to God's will" (Mearsheimer and Walt 2006: 41). The 'Christian AIPAC', as its leader Pastor John C. Hagee titled the umbrella organization uniting more than two million pro-Israel American Christians (Chaim 2006) has strong personal ties to the White House: When attending CUFI's 12th annual summit in 2017, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence declared that he personally supports Israel because he is a Christian and that "under President Donald Trump, … America stands with Israel." (CUFI, 2017). During the same conference, Netanyahu declared that "evangelical Christians are Israel's best friends" (Ibid.); being aware of America's crucial role in supporting Israel. Up to the present day, the largest part of U.S. support for Israel is expressed by military aid and diplomatic support.

The country receives its military aid mainly through the U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) which helps the country to conduct controversial military operations in the right of "self-defence" and "safeguarding international security", or, as Berrigan puts it: "Washington has essentially allowed Israel to define 'self-defence' however it chooses" (2009: 6)[33]. Apart from providing financial support and missiles for Israel, the United States grant special advantages to Israel, which has been demonstrated by two Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) providing military assistance: the first one of 2007 (expiring in 2018) allowed Israel, unlike any other FMF recipient, to spend 26.3 percent of FMF on weapons systems manufactured domestically (Ibid.: 9-16). In September 2016, the two states signed a new ten-year MoU over the fiscal years 2019-2028 under which Israel will receive another $38 billion for military assistance, the largest single pledge of military assistance in US history (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016). Furthermore, Washington provides massive diplomatic support to Israel.

[33] One of the most controversial operations in recent years was Israel's large use of cluster bombs during the 34-day long Israel-Hezbollah war in July 2006, which were, according to Human Rights Watch, mainly of US origin. A second example was Israel's major military campaign called "Operation Cast Lead" against Hamas in the Gaza strip on 27 December 2008, where, as in the first case in Lebanon, the vast majority of the victims were civilians and US supplied weapons were used to carry out the attacks (Ibid.: 13-15).

Since 1982, the United States has vetoed 43 times against UN resolutions on Israel (Middle East Eye 2017).

Against this outlined political and ideological background, Trump's highly symbolic and provocative recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 and his decision to relocate the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem in May 2018 can be regarded as a success for both the American Zionist lobby and the Israeli Right[34]. As a matter of U.S. law, Trump's decision is in accordance with the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 that declares the city as the capital of the State of Israel. However, the Embassy Act and Trump's recognition violate international law, as Israel is legally bound by the Fourth Geneva Convention (Sayej 2017).

In the Arab world, Trump's unilaterally decision has been interpreted as a 'new Balfour Declaration' (Iraqi 2017; Khouri 2017). Indeed, both cases show interesting parallels. The Balfour Declaration meant the conveyance of a *carte blanche* by the imperialistic major power Great Britain to the European settler colonial movement for the appropriation of territory of the indigenous population (see chapter 3.2), without acknowledging the rights of the latter. Precisely one hundred years later, Trump is likely to achieve the same results for the de-Arabisation of Jerusalem. In addition to this, both cases, as has been shown in this chapter, were the outcome of several parallel processes, including the Zionist movement's intensive lobbying, evangelical Christian beliefs and strategic goals of the respective imperial power for the region.

[34] Other states are starting to follow his decision. Guatemala, one of the seven states that voted with the United States in a UN vote to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel besides Honduras, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Togo; will officially open its new embassy in Jerusalem right after the U.S. on 16th May 2018 (Landau 2018).

5 Conclusion

History lies at the core of every conflict. Only the honest and painful confrontation with the past that includes Israel's and international recognition of the crimes of 1948 can provide a real base for the revitalization of the peace process. However, the current Israeli right-wing regime offers little hope for such confrontation. This analysis has shown that Israeli political leadership did not shift to the extreme right overnight. The Zionists' recruitment of the previously anti-Zionist Jews by the use of Judaism as a *source* lead to the rise of religious Zionism, that used Judaism increasingly as a *resource*, in particular after 1967. As a result, the lines between Zionism and Judaism, whose meaning and nature had previously mutually excluded each other for the vast majority of secular and religious Jews, became blurred, just because of traditional Zionism's ideological change under the flourishing clout of the ascendingly radical religious Zionists.

However, the shortcut that the conflict can be thus regarded as an exclusively political one, to which Zionists added a religious dimension by abusing and manipulating Judaism, does not correspond to the entire historical truth either. For instance, the politically moderate Mizrachi movement (chapter 4.2.) shows that Zionism itself served as a tool for early Jewish messianic thoughts, albeit pronounced by a minority. In these terms, the movement supported Zionism from the very beginning to the extent that it remained a political ideology which would bring Diasporic Jews to Palestine and that aimed at promoting Jewish religious education within the framework of Zionism.

The thesis' attempt to set an end to the confusion about the terms Judaism and Zionism merely constitutes the tip of the iceberg of the work ahead. Regardless of one's personal belief, one cannot deny Israel's religiously and ethnically complex society. This is why political and academic debates should include religious leaders and authorities, rather than discussing from a certain distance about the 'Other' without listening to their voices, in order to achieve a more fruitful ground of mutual understanding.

Religion itself can provide means of adequate religious education in the sense of promoting human rights. As regards Judaism, the Israeli human rights organization 'Rabbis for Human Rights', which represents over one hundred Israeli rabbis and rabbinical students from different streams of Judaism and "derives its authority from […] Jewish tradition and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (2018) challenges the Israeli regime on the ground and provokes an urgently needed different perception of the conflict on an international level. As regards Christianity, I am personally convinced that a healthy reading and interpretation of the Bible points to Israel as a multi-ethnic state, rather than a state with an exclusive Jewish identity.

Criticizing the Israeli regime should thus not be confused with demonizing Israel and Israeli Jewry as a whole in the sense of not recognizing the state's right to exist. Despite the ever more evident ongoing violations of human rights and international law committed by Israel, the Palestine question remains a highly controversial issue in Europe, especially in Germany, because it reflects the two principal sensitive questions of European history – colonialism and anti-Semitism. A new dealing with the Shoa on an academic and political level becomes urgent, as Israel continues its opportunistic references to the Holocaust in order to silence any critique regarding its colonialization of Palestine. Instead of fuelling the "chain of victimisation" (Pappé 2008) at the cost of the Palestinians who became the "victims' victim" (Ibid.), it is urgent to address the dark chapters of Israel's and Europe's past with a new approach, an ethical revolution – not in order to forget, but for the sake of the promotion of human rights and justice.

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